

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed October 2, 1998, Examiner rejected claims 1 - 21 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. The claims have now been clarified and condensed in order to overcome this rejection. Examiner also cited the patents to Hasenwinkle and Kontianen as being possibly readable on most of the claims, stating that in the response Applicant should take care to ensure that the claims set forth an invention outside that as shown in the prior art.

In the claims as amended, claim 1 is now a condensed and clarified version of claim 1 combined with claim 2 as filed. Amended claim 1 recites that in the present invention a saw box is mounted in a work piece infeed path and is skewable relative to the infeed path. A saw arbor is mounted horizontally therein so that the saw arbor is generally laterally across the infeed path. An array of saw blades are mounted on the saw arbor. A saw spacing means and a saw translating means are provided. The saw spacing means presets the lateral spacing between individual saw blades of the array of saw blades. The saw translating means actively translates in unison the entire array of saw blades relative to the saw box according to an optimized sawing profile. Amended claim 1 recites that the saw spacing means and the saw translating means are parallel rigid members which extend generally parallel to the saw arbor. Saw guides are rigidly mounted to the rigid members. The rigid members are selectively translatable to correspondingly selectively position the saw blades within the sawbox.

With reference to the prior art, Hasenwinkle teaches articulating a saw box which is positioned at the end of a flexible fence. No movement is provided of the saws relative to the saw box so as to follow an optimized sawing profile. Kontianen mentions presetting of saw spacing in a non-enabling disclosure which fails to teach how such a result is arrived at. Again, it is not disclosed to translate the saws relative to the saw box to actively follow an optimized sawing profile.

Dutina, United States Patent No. 4,599,929 teaches floating guides 9' on guideways 13 so

that the saw guides are positioned as they float along guide ways 13 in response to the position of the timber block having been fed through the chipping heads. It is not taught to rigidly mount the saw guide package to the guide ways. No saw box is disclosed.

Applicant also wishes to bring to the Examiner's attention United States Patent No. 5,761,979 to McGeehee. A copy of the McGeehee patent is enclosed. McGeehee teaches twisting (skewing) and translating (slewing) saw blades on a fixed arbor (see for example column 3, lines 20 - 23). No sawbox is provided. In the present invention a sawbox, arbor and blades are actively skewed, and within the sawbox the blades are actively positioned.

Claim 3 is amended to specify that the parallel rigid members of claim 1 include actuatable positioning cylinders and corresponding cylinder shafts. The saw translating means is specified as further comprising a tie bar rigidly mounted to one of the cylinder shafts. The tie bar is also rotatably mounted to the saw arbor so that the saw arbor is free to rotate as it drives the saw blades in cutting engagement with the work piece, the tie bar coupled to the arbor so that, while the saw arbor is rotating, lateral translation of the first cylinder shaft also causes corresponding lateral translation of the saw arbor. This use of a tie bar is not to Applicant's knowledge disclosed in the prior art.

Claim 4 is amended to describe how, in one embodiment, a splined sleeve is slidingly mounted between the saw blades and the saw arbor.

Claims 14 and 21 are editorially amended to improve their clarity.

New claim 22 describes an embodiment in which the tie bar is mounted to all of the cylinder shafts so that all of the cylinder shafts are translated in unison by actuation of a single positioning cylinder. New claim 23 specifies that the tie bar may include a selectively actuatable clamp so as to selectively couple the tie bar to the first cylinder shaft. New claim 24 specifies that the tie bar includes multiple selectively actuatable clamps so that the tie bar may be selectively coupled to all the

cylinder shafts. The positioning cylinders may thus be independently actuated to preset the saw blade spacing and the clamps then actuated to couple the tie bar to the cylinder shafts so as to actively translate the saw blades in unison at their preset saw blade spacing by actuation of only the first positioning cylinder. No new subject matter has been added.

Examiner is respectfully requested to now pass this application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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